



The Clouds

Juan José Saer

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The Clouds

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"Saer is one of the best writers of today in any language."—Ricardo Piglia

"What Saer presents marvelously is the experience of reality, and the characters' attempts to write their own narratives within its excess."—*Bookforum*

In modern-day Paris, Pichón Garay receives a computer disk containing a manuscript—which might be fictional, or could be a memoir—by Doctor Real, a nineteenth-century physician tasked with leading a group of five mental patients on a trip to a recently constructed asylum. Their trip, which ends in disaster and fire, is a brilliant tragicomedy thanks to the various insanities of the patients, among whom is a delusional man who greatly over-estimates his own importance and a nymphomaniac nun who tricks everyone—even the other patients—into sleeping with her.

Fascinating as a faux historical novel and written in Saer's typically gorgeous, Proustian style, *The Clouds* can be read as a metaphor for exile—a huge theme for Saer and a lot of Argentine writers—as well as an examination of madness.

Juan José Saer was the leading Argentinian writer of the post-Borges generation. The author of numerous novels and short-story collections (including *Scars* and *La Grande*), Saer was awarded Spain's prestigious Nadal Prize in 1987 for *The Event*. Five of his novels are available from Open Letter Books.

Hilary Vaughn Dobel has an MFA in poetry and translation from Columbia University. She is the author of two manuscripts and, in addition to Saer, she has translated work by Carlos Pintado.

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